# 24-001 - Strikes/Punches to the Face, Head, or Neck

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

**FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE**

Field Operations Support Services

**STRIKES / PUNCHES TO THE FACE, HEAD, OR NECK**

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Field Operations Directive is to establish policy and procedures for Department members regarding the use of strikes or punches to the face, head, or neck during a use of force incident. This information is a guideline and may not apply to every use of force incident a Department member will encounter.

This Field Operations Directive does not apply to Custody Division which has different requirements pursuant to the settlement agreement in *Alex Rosas, et al. v. Leroy D. Baca et al.*, United States District Court, Case No. CV 12-00428 DDP.

## POLICY

Department members may only strike or punch a subject in the face, head, or neck in response to a physical assault, an imminent physical assault, or a greater threat.

A physical assault is imminent when it is about to take place, impending, likely to happen, or at the point of happening.

In any application of force, the Department member shall only use that level of force which is proportional, objectively reasonable, and which reasonably appears necessary based on the totality of the circumstances.

Strikes or punches to the face, head, or neck are reportable uses of force. Department members are to follow MPP 3-10/100.00, Use of Force Reporting - Department Member Responsibilities.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

If strikes or punches to the head, face, or neck are used, Department members shall continually assess the strikes or punches delivered and their effects on the subject throughout the force incident. Department members should transition to other force options or techniques if strikes or punches are ineffective.

Department members should attempt to use control holds or techniques and handcuff the subject as soon as feasible and safe to do so.

Department members should use caution when delivering punches or strikes with the primary knuckles of

their fists. When striking with fists, there is the potential for Department members to suffer debilitating and potentially career-ending injuries (e.g., metacarpal fractures). Instead of impacting with the primary knuckles, Department members may consider using open palm or hammer fist strikes (impacting with the side of a fist), which can be just as effective and reduce the risk of injury to the Department member.

For further force-related information, contact Training Bureau's Force Training Unit (FTU) at 562-347-4500 (Whittier) or 661-295-7973 (Pitchess).

## REFERENCES

MPP section 3-10/020.00, Use of Force Policy

MPP section 3-10/030.00, Unreasonable Force and Duty to Intervene

MPP section 3-10/118.00, Performance to Standards - Use of Force

MPP section 3-10/100.00, Use of Force Reporting – Department Member Responsibilities